

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 02086 212000Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01
/053 W

-----212004Z 028187 /44

O R 211838Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9420
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USNATO BRUSSELS 1552
USEC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 2086

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SP
SUBJECT: SUAREZ VISIT

1. PRESS COVERAGE HERE OF THE SUAREZ VISIT ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BEEN QUITE GOOD, STRESSING THE SYMBOLISM OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN SPAIN, THOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN HINTS THAT THE U.S. MIGHT HAVE SOME PARTISAN MOTIVES. BUT IN SPAIN'S ONLY MONDAY MORNING NEWSPAPER, THE "HOJA DEL LUNES" (PUT OUT BY A CONSORTIUM OF THE DAILIES WHICH TAKE A MONDAY HOLIDAY), THE INTERPRETATIONS TOOK AN EXPLICITLY TROUBLESOME TURN.

2. THE "HOJA DEL LUNES" ARTICLE ALLEGED, WITHOUT CITING
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PAGE 02 MADRID 02086 212000Z

ANY SOURCES, THAT SUAREZ WOULD, WHILE IN THE U.S., RECEIVE QTE SUBSTANTIVE POLITICAL BACKING FROM THE POPULIST CARTER UNQTE. IT EVEN MADE THE EXTRAORDINARY CLAIM THAT SUAREZ WOULD WAIT UNTIL HE WAS IN THE U.S. TO ACTUALLY ANNOUNCE HIS CANDIDACY, WHICH SEEMS MOST UNLIKELY SINCE SUAREZ KNOWS AS WELL AS ANYONE THIS WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT SIT WELL AMONG THE SPANISH, WHO RETAIN

THEIR PRIDE.

3. THIS STORY QUICKLY PROMPTED A PHONE CALL TO THE EMBASSY FROM FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER AND CURRENT CENTRIST POLITICAL CONTENDER AREILZA, WHO APPROVED OF THE SUAREZ VISIT BUT DEPLORED THE INTERVENTIONIST SLANT GIVEN TO IT BY THE ARTICLE. AREILZA SAID HE HAD RECEIVED SEVERAL PHONE CALLS EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER THE IMPLICATIONS OF U.S. INTERVENTION. HE UNDERSTOOD WE WERE ONLY SUPPORTING THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIZATION, NOT PARTICULAR POLITICAL OPTIONS, AND AGREED WITH EMBOFF'S OBSERVATION THAT IT WAS PERFECTLY NATURAL IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT FOR HEADS OF GOVERNMENT TO TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES EVEN THOUGH THEY MIGHT BE FACING ELECTIONS--THE VISIT OF BRITISH PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN BEING THE LATEST IN A LONG SERIES OF EXAMPLES. AREILZA ENDED WITH THE HOPE THAT WE MIGHT DISCREETLY DO SOMETHING TO DISPEL THE INTERVENTIONIST THEORY PROPAGATED BY THIS ARTICLE.

4. THE QUESTION OF THE INTERESTS OF AREILZA AND THE CENTRO DEMOCRATICO ASIDE, WHICH HAVE PROMPTED CONSIDERABLE RESERVE THERE ABOUT SUAREZ'S RUNNING FOR OFFICE, THE SLANT GIVEN BY THIS ARTICLE IS UNHELPFUL NOT ONLY TO OUR INTERESTS BUT TO THE INTERESTS OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND, WE JUDGE, TO THOSE OF SUREZ HIMSELF. WE WILL GET QUESTIONS AND, SUBJECT TO WHATEVER ADJUSTMENTS THE DEPARTMENT MIGHT WISH TO MAKE, WE PLAN TO TRY TO DISCREETLY DISPEL ANY NOTION OF U.S. PARTISANSHIP, ALONG THE FOLLOWING, IF ASKED AND PREFERABLY ON BACKGROUND, LINES.

--THE VISIT, LIKE THAT OF THE KING LAST YEAR, IS A
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PAGE 03 MADRID 02086 212000Z

VISIBLI SYMBOL OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE SPANISH DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS, AS ENUNCIATED BY THE PRESIDENT IN HIS UN
SPEECH.

--THE UNITED STATES SUPPORTS THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS
BUT HAS NO REPEAT NO PREFERENCE AMONG PARTICULAR DEMOCRATIC

POLITICAL OPTIONS. THE CHOICE AMONG SUCH OPTIONS IS THE
EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF THE SPANISH PEOPLE IN FREE ELECTIONS.

--SPAIN IS AN IMPORTANT EUROPEAN COUNTRY. HEADS OF
GOVERNMENTS OF EUROPEAN AND OTHER MAJOR COUNTRIES, WHETHER
FACING ELECTIONS OR NOT, COMMONLY VISIT AMONG THEMSELVES
AND WITH U.S. LEADERS. EATON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, MINISTERIAL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MADRID02086
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770096-0899
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770339/aaaabhyu.tel
Line Count: 111
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 18afd4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3047545
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SUAREZ VISIT
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, SP, US, (SUAREZ, MARIO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/18afd4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009